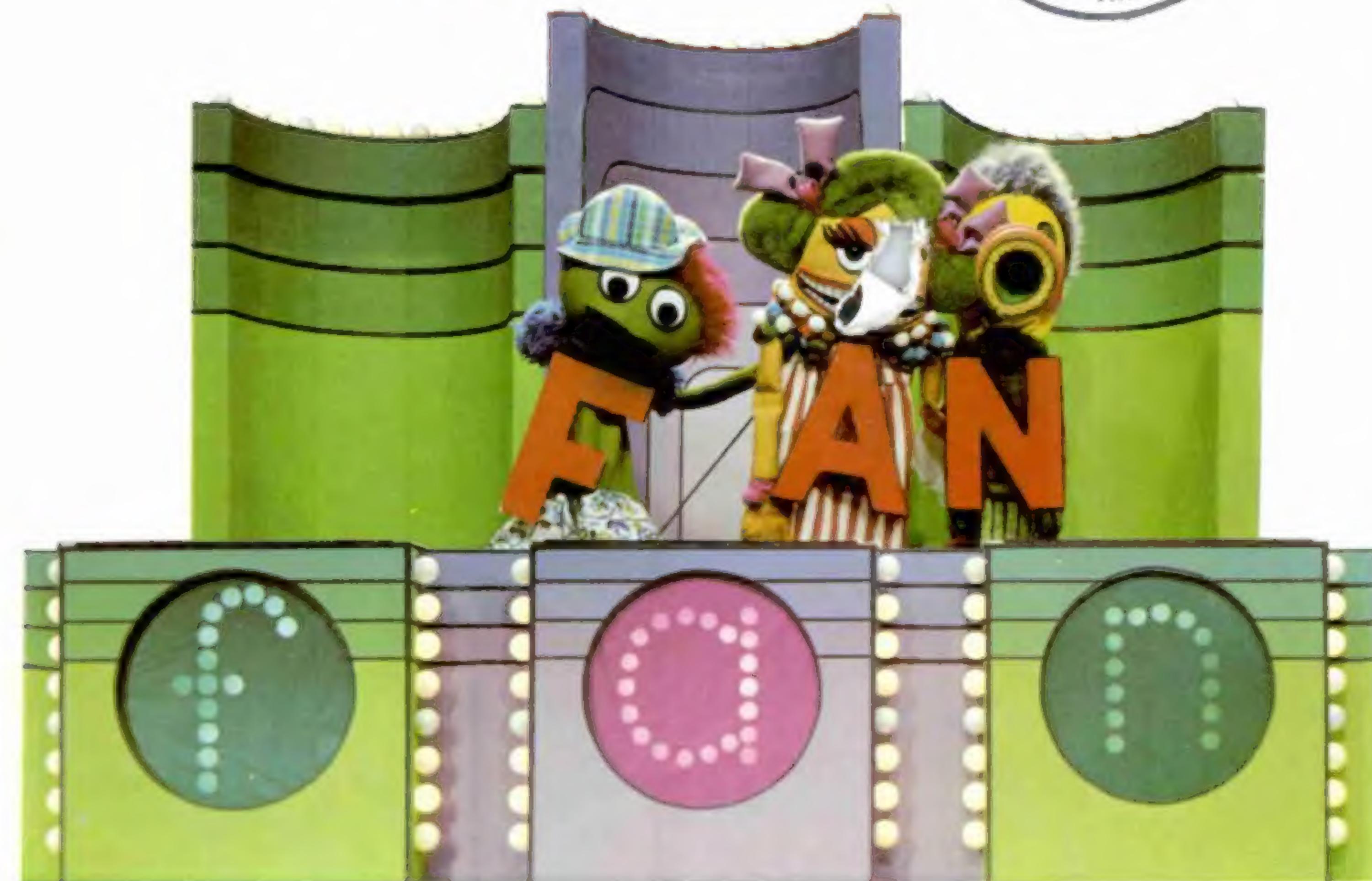




KETC-TV, Channel 9  
6996 Millbrook Blvd.  
St. Louis, Missouri 63130

New 30-program beginning reading series  
available immediately

# THE LETTER PEOPLE



The Letter People join Monty Swell and a  
contestant for "The Catching Game."

Produced by KETC-TV St. Louis

# Foreword

THE LETTER PEOPLE is a new series for primary level students in the area of beginning reading. There are no quality sequential reading instruction television materials available to meet the needs of this grade level. KETC-TV has launched production of 120 programs featuring the unique Letter People, each having his or her identity defined by a letter of the alphabet and a personal story or myth about how he or she got started in life. The pace is fast, but not frenetic; the puppets are fascinating; the animation exciting and carefully integrated into the production design. The first thirty programs are available now for distribution. The series of fifteen-minute programs will be a strong addition to your in-school schedule, as well as to your late afternoon, early evening, and Saturday morning schedule, for viewing by families.

Enclosed in this pamphlet is a set of buy-in, lease and rental plans, geared to meet your specific needs and budget plans. If you have any questions about the series, regarding costs, production design and/or content, be sure to write. The address is: KETC-TV, 6996 Millbrook Boulevard, Saint Louis, Missouri 63130.



James B. Barnes  
Director of Programming  
KETC-TV, St. Louis, Missouri

# The Letter People On TV



For more than a year, KETC-TV has been producing pilots for a new television series designed to teach basic reading skills to children between the ages of five and seven. The series, titled **The Letter People**, has been tested extensively in St. Louis and in cities across the country, and the response has been gratifying. **The Letter People** is based on the Alpha One reading program, in which each letter person (there are 26) has an alliterative description of an easily recognizable characteristic — for example, Mr. M has a Munching Mouth, Mr. F has Funny Feet. As the series progresses, the Letter People learn to put their sounds together to form words, which give children successful reading experience in the encoding and decoding of words. The series uses musical comedy, puppetry, animation, rhyming, fantasy, games and advanced television techniques to catch and hold attention.

**The Letter People** should fulfill a very definite need in this country. Reading remains the single most important educational skill taught in classrooms today, for reading is fundamental for the student's future academic progress and is essential to life in the modern world. And yet, one out of every four students in the U.S. has significant reading deficiencies, and, in large city school systems, up to half of the students read below expectation.

Television can have a great impact on the reading skills of today's and tomorrow's children. **Sesame Street** and **The Electric Company** have

proven this beyond a doubt. Yet neither of these fine series were designed to meet the objectives of **The Letter People** . . . to give beginning reading instruction for all primary students.

**The Letter People** concept was developed by New Dimensions in Education, in New York, and is a complete reading curriculum intended for first graders but may be extended for use in kindergarten through third grade. The theory behind Alpha One is that children's reading vocabulary can be rapidly increased by teaching them to phonetically decode words. The emphasis is placed on enabling students to have successful, enjoyable reading experiences and to encourage interest through active participation. With this in mind, the characters that populate letter people land were originated.

The basic concepts of the Alpha program were developed over a period of seven years. It emerged as a multi-media, multi-sensory reading package used in more than 30,000 classrooms across the country — including St. Louis.

Ten pilots have been completed for the series, and KETC-TV is working now to find long-range funding to underwrite production costs of 120 programs to complete the series. Preliminary testing in St. Louis and in the major cities has brought in enthusiastic response from students, teachers and principals, and an all-out effort is being made to bring this valuable reading concept to schools across the country.

# Why a reading? series

In January, 1973, supported by recommendations from the Missouri State Department of Education, KETC-TV called a conference of 32 reading and curriculum specialists to evaluate the KETC-TV needs assessment research, and to discuss the suitability of utilizing the Alpha One reading curriculum as the basis for a televised series on beginning reading instruction. Based on endorsements of the curriculum specialists, and the successful nationwide testing results of Alpha One (designed by New Dimensions in Education, Inc.), KETC-TV undertook produc-

tion of pilot programs. After several additional months of testing, a series of thirty fifteen-minute programs has been produced.

Whenever televised reading instruction is discussed, the productions of the Children's Television Workshop usually come to mind. However, as fine as **Sesame Street** and **The Electric Company** are, neither is intended to meet the specific objectives or reach the audience for which the **Letter People** is designed. The following chart summarizes the differences among the three programs:

PROGRAM	AGE GROUP & GRADE LEVEL	PRIMARY OBJECTIVE
Sesame Street	Ages: 3 - 5	Reading and school readiness for the disadvantaged child
	Pre-school & Kindergarten	
The Letter People	Ages: 5 - 7	Beginning reading instruction for all primary students
	Kindergarten - Grade 2	
The Electric Company	Ages: 7 - 9	Remedial instruction for the child who is beginning to experience reading difficulties
	Grades 2 - 4	

From this chart, it is obvious that the three series differ in their target audiences and primary utilization:

**The Letter People** offers a core beginning reading curriculum for early primary grades. **Sesame Street** focuses primarily on readiness for preschoolers. **The Electric Company** is intended to provide remediation for those children beginning to experience reading difficulties — usually apparent by second grade.

In terms of curriculum, there is some overlap. Both **Sesame Street** and **The Letter People** teach visual and auditory recognition of the letters of the alphabet. Both **The Letter People** and **The Electric Company** teach decoding. However, this overlap, far from being a drawback to any one of the three series, is a desirable advantage when regarded from a total curriculum viewpoint.



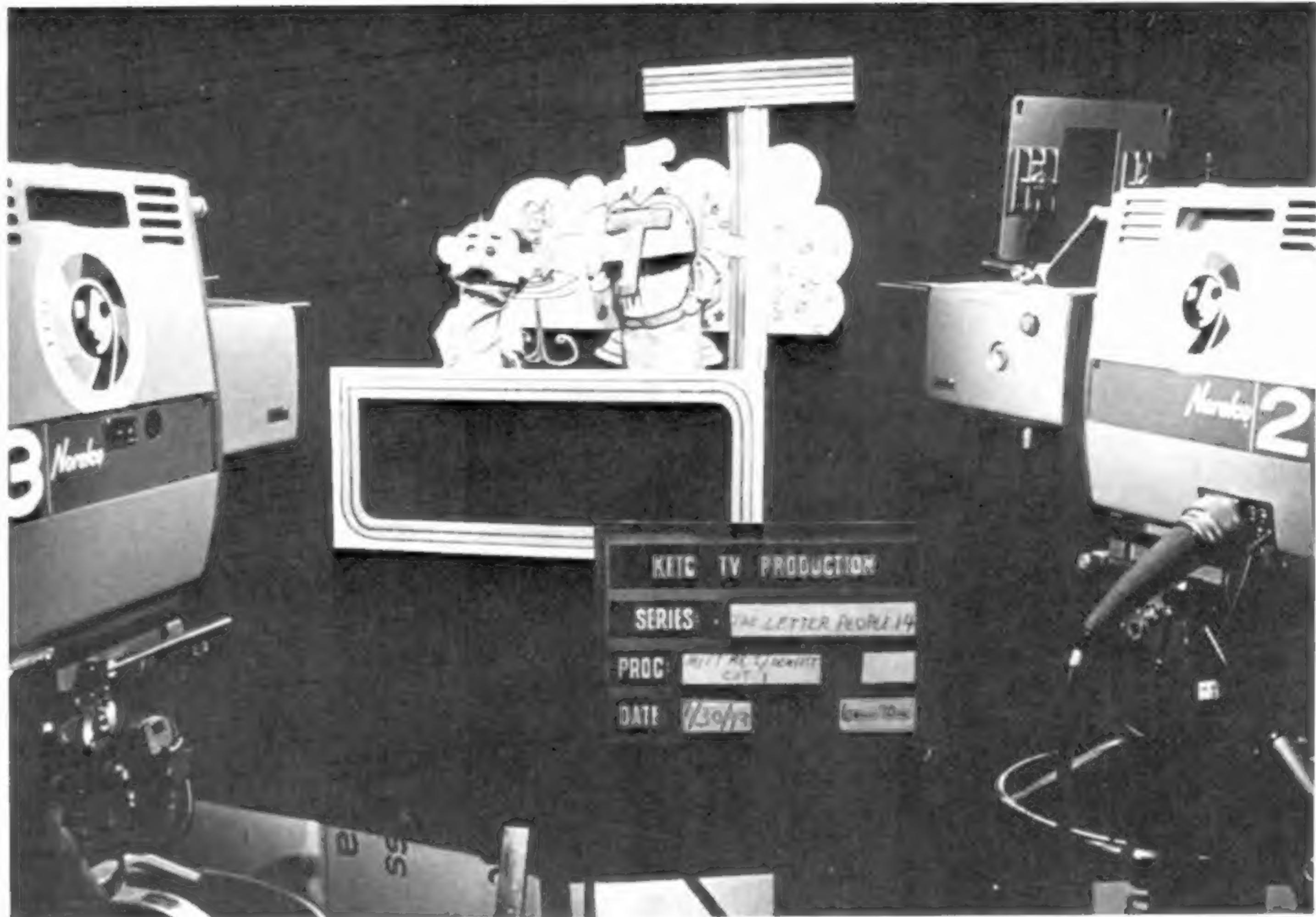
Mr. F looks at shoes for his Funny Feet.



Puppeteers give life to a segment from "Meet Mr. F."



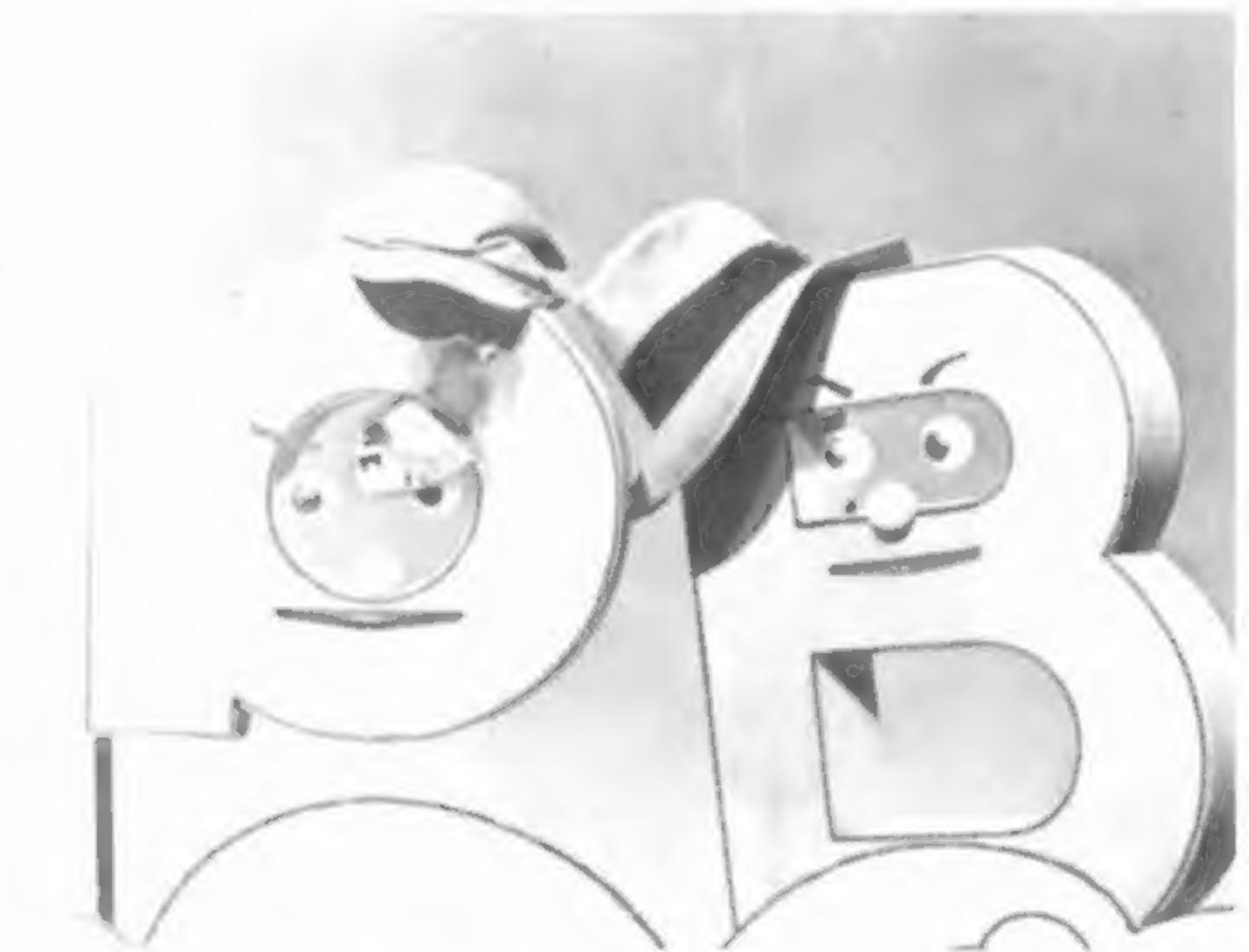
Mr. Z is about to board Captain Zemo's Zeppelin for a flight to Letter People Land.



Cameras prepare for a taping of "Meet Mr. T" when he takes his Tall Teeth to the dentist.



Mr. N sings about his Noisy Nose.



Two B's, a lower case b and a capital B, argue about which one is the authentic letter B.

# Letters to the Letter People

*Kaleidoscope* featured a new beginning reading series "The Letter People" in the May issue. We would like to share with you some of the recent developments in this exciting new production.

Response to the first ten programs have been coming in from many sources, and they have been very gratifying. Selected from the responses are the following:

## from school superintendents

... The programs are educationally sound and designed for practical application in classroom experiences. The content and quality of the television programs indicate that this series will have a significant impact with children for whom traditional methods may be ineffective."

*Paul W. Briggs, Cleveland Public Schools*

"After thoroughly reviewing your new television reading series called 'The Letter People,' my reading staff and I want to commend you for this truly significant contribution to classroom reading instruction."

*Nolan Estes, Dallas Independent School District*

... These programs are apparently well founded on solid educational principles and effectively teach basic phonics and reading skills."

*William J. Leary, The School Committee of the City of Boston*

... The subsequent favorable reports by the Council's Needs Assessment Committee indicate that you have taken an unparalleled step in the production of long-needed classroom video programming."

*Richard P. Gousha, Milwaukee Public Schools*



## from teachers

"I have been watching 'The Letter People' with my two kindergarten classes and have found it to be one of the best programs I have ever seen for teaching letter sounds. It is interesting, imaginative and effective."

*Elizabeth Schreiber, Jefferson School*

... I have seen three segments of 'The Letter People'; 'Meet Mr. M', 'Meet Mr. F', and 'Meet Mr. T'. I have found them totally delightful, exhibiting elements of spontaneity and humor which are sure to appeal to young children."

*L. Shippers, Language Arts Director, Affton School District*

... Content and presentation left nothing to be desired. The children love the puppet characters."

*Helen J. Buford, Hickory School*

... and most importantly ...

## from children

"Thank you for the Saturday morning shows, especially 'The Letter People'."

*Robert*

"I like Mr. M because he has the beginning of my name."

*Michelle*

"I like 'funny feet' because he's the funniest one."

*Donald*

"Would you please send me some 'Letter People' pictures. Could I have two of each picture because my brother will get crabby if he doesn't get some too. Or could I have three because my sister will get real crabby too."

*Arvin*



# Sample format

**Open:** 30 seconds -- animated clip, "Come and Meet the Letter People".

**Segment:** 2 minutes 30 seconds- The host of the new television game show, THE CATCHING GAME, calls a few of the Letter People together to discuss how the game will be played. It is decided that a special place will be needed for the Letter People to stand during the "sound catches". Miss A designs three boxes; the starting box, the middle or catching box, and the ending box. Since Miss A must be in all the catches (vowel inclusion), it is also decided that the catching box will be bigger than the other two. The clue boxes later become the components of the set for THE CATCHING GAME.

**Segment:** 30-45 seconds-- animated clip-- The concept of start, middle, and end, is reviewed. The repeated sequence also establishes the order of left to right.

**Segment:** Round Number One of THE CATCHING GAME -- 4 minutes -- The contestant is shown a picture of a (baseball) bat, and asked to sound out the word. The contestant must then call out the proper Letter People to fill the clue boxes. Mr. B is called to get into the starting clue box. Miss A is called fill the middle or catching clue box, and Mr. T is called to occupy the ending box. Only when the Letter People have made their sound catch, does the contestant win a silly prize i.e. two bats; a baseball bat and the animal bat. The host indicates that round number one is over and asks the audience to watch an important message. Round One examines the process of encoding.

**Segment:** 60-90 seconds- animated clip-- a review of one or more of the letters b, a, t, in the initial position. A listen for the sound that starts segment ala BEAURE-GARD BALLOON, ALFALFA THE ANGORA CAT, and TARLETON TURKEY.

**Segment:** Round Number Two of THE CATCHING GAME -- 4 minutes- Three Letter People are already in their respective clue boxes to spell the word "fan". The contestant is asked to identify each Letter Person and also give their sound characteristics i.e. funny feet, achoo, and noisy nose.

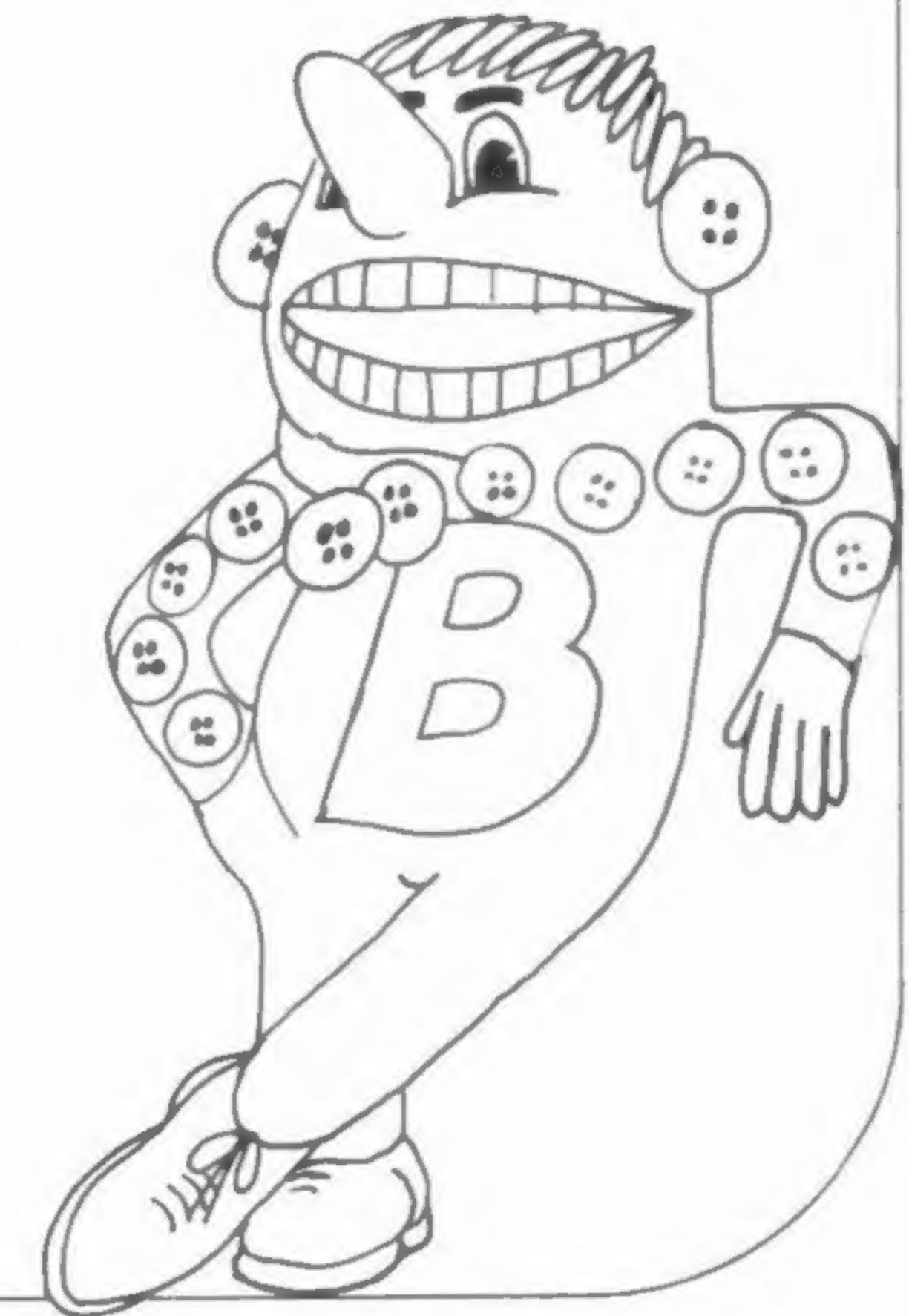
**Segment:** Round Two (cont.) The contestant then must ask the Letter People to make their sounds catch. After the sound catch is made the contestant must tell the host if the sound catch was correctly made. Lastly, the contestant repeats the sound catch, and must pick which object on the picture board is in fact, a fan. THE CATCHING GAME ends by awarding the contestant with another silly prize. Round Two examines the process of decoding.

**Close:** Closing Credits-- animated clip--



# Programs

- 1 MEET MR. M
- 2 MEET MR. T
- 3 MEET MR. F
- 4 MEET MR. H
- 5 MEET MR. N
- 6 MEET MR. B
- 7 MEET MISS A
- 8 WHAT'S THE CATCH?
- 9 THE TRYOUT
- 10 THE CATCHING GAME
- 11 MEET MR. Z
- 12 MEET MR. P
- 13 MEET MR. S
- 14 MEET MISS E
- 15 MEET MISS I
- 16 MEET MISS O
- 17 MEET MISS U
- 18 MEET MR. V
- 19 MEET MR. L



- 20 THE STORY OF MR. V
- THE STORY OF MR. S
- 21 THE SQUOOSH
- 22 MEET MR. D
- 23 MEET MR. G
- 24 MEET MR. C
- 25 MEET ME. K
- 26 THE STORY OF C & K
- SOFT C
- 27 MEET MR. W
- 28 LONG SOUNDS
- 29 SILENT E
- 30 ADJACENT VOWELS

# Purchase information

Options available for utilization of The Letter People series.

## 30, 15-minute color programs

### 1. Consortium Plan

\$8,500 per station buy-in to the production consortium entitles station to:

- dub series on its own tapes
- obtain seven years unlimited rights for use of the series in broadcast and non-broadcast formats

### 3. Rental Plan

\$100 per program--entire series for \$3,000; entitles a station to:

- obtain tapes via a bicycle schedule from KETC-TV
- obtain telecast rights for use of each program for any number of runs within a seven-day period

### 2. Lease Plan

\$10,000 per station for a five-year lease arrangement entitles a station to:

- dub series on its own tapes
- obtain telecast rights for the five-year period
- make payments on a \$2,000 per year basis



### \* Discounts

*Additional stations within a state can participate in the first two of the above plans at 50% of stated cost. These stations using the consortium or lease plans can obtain the 50% discount only if a distribution arrangement can be worked out with the primary within the state.*

### \* Non-broadcast formats

*The thirty program color series is available in either  $\frac{3}{4}$ " U-Matic videotape format or  $\frac{1}{2}$ " EIAJ helical format at a purchase price of \$150 per program; \$4,500 for the series. The purchase price entitles the purchaser to unlimited audio-visual and closed-circuit television rights only.*